



MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS



May 22, 2007

The Honorable Representative Paul Condino
N0799 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Condino;

I am writing on behalf of Michigan's animal control officers to support House Bills 4551 and 4552. Animal control officers in virtually every county and most major cities in our state are called in to investigate animal cruelty on a daily basis. We frequently investigate cases in which large numbers of animals are mistreated. In many of these cases, the punishment for neglect under our current anti-cruelty law is the same whether a person harms one animal or fifty. *Even if 100 animals die from their mistreatment, if the charge is neglect, the punishment is often the same: a 93-day misdemeanor and a maximum fine of \$1,000.* In reality, these minimal penalties are regularly reduced even further.

Representative Espinoza's bill, HB 4551, offers a fair system in which the punishment is fit to the crime based on the number of animals affected. Representative Byrnes' bill, HB 4552, provides judges with *the option* of consecutive sentencing if they feel that a perpetrator's crime is especially egregious, or if they want to extend oversight to ensure that a person is not becoming a danger to humans as well.

MAACO supports these changes to Michigan's anti-cruelty law because they create punishment that fits the crime, and will help make our state a safer state for animals and people. Thank you very much for taking up these important bills.

Sincerely,

Tom Miller, President
Michigan Association of Animal Control Officers

Cc: Rep. Espinoza
Rep. Byrnes